

Message Text

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SUBJECT: BREZHNEV ON AGRICULTURAL REORGANIZATION

REF: A. MOSCOW 15530 B. MOSCOW 15881

1. SUMMARY: PRAVDA LEAD EDITORIAL DECEMBER 16, REPRINTED IN ALL CENTRAL PAPERS DECEMBER 17 AND 18, PROVIDES CLEAREST INDICATION OF GENERAL DIRECTION OF BREZHNEV'S MAJOR ADDRESS TO RECENTLY CONCLUDED TWO-DAY CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM. EDITORIAL CONFIRMS EMBASSY'S IMPRESSION THAT DOMESTIC ECONOMIC QUESTIONS RECEIVED BULK OF ATTENTION IN BREZHNEV'S SPEECH. MAIN POINTS OF INTEREST ARE INCREASED PUSH FOR "INDUSTRIALIZATION" OF AGRICULTURE AND AVOWED AIM OF CONVERGENCE OF COLLECTIVE AND STATE FORMS OF PROPERTY IN AGRICULTURE. END SUMMARY

2. ASIDE FROM REVEALING MORE PRECISE SIZE OF SOVIET GRAIN HARVEST (222.5 MILLION TONS), EDITORIAL PROVIDES NOTHING NEW IN WAY OF STATISTICS ON PERFORMANCE OF ECONOMY IN 1973 OR ON 1974 PLAN. GENERAL TONE IS UPBEAT INDICATING SATISFACTION AT ECONOMIC TURNAROUND AFTER DIF-
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FICULTIES EXPERIENCED IN 1972.

3. AS REFLECTED IN EDITORIAL, SPEECH OFFERED INTERESTING PERSPECTIVE ON AGRICULTURAL REORGANIZATION. EDITORIAL NOTES THAT AGRICULTURE IS NOW ON MORE SOLID BASE AND THAT CURRENT OBJECTIVE IS TO PROCEED WITH ITS INTENSIFICATION AND PLACE IT ON CONTEMPORARY INDUSTRIAL BASIS. EDITORIAL CALLS FOR CONCENTRATION OF COLLECTIVE AND STATE FARM ACTIVITIES BY FORMING "INTER-SOVKHOZ, INTER-KOLKHOZ, AND ALSO SOVKHOZ-KOLKHOZ ENTERPRISES." FORMATION OF SUCH GROUPINGS ARE DESIGNED, INTER ALIA, TO BRING ABOUT THE ELIMINATION OF THE DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN KOLKHOZ AND STATE FORMS OF PROPERTY. LATTER OBJECTIVE IS DESCRIBED AS PART OF PARTY'S PROGRAM.

4. REFERENCE TO NEED FOR IMPROVING MANAGEMENT OF ECONOMY ON BASIS OF CONGRESS DECISIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF SUBSEQUENT THREE YEARS MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO OUR YUGOSLAV SOURCE'S BELIEF (REF B) THAT MORE BASIC ECONOMIC QUESTIONS WILL BE TAKEN UP IN ANOTHER PLENUM EARLY IN 1974.

5. JUDGING FROM EDITORIAL, BREZHNEV CAME DOWN HARD ON NEED FOR STRENGTHENING OF PARTY ROLE IN ALL SECTORS OF ECONOMY. DIRECTION OF ECONOMY IS DESCRIBED AS PARTY AND POLITICAL AFFAIR AND NOT TASK TO BE APPROACHED FROM NARROWLY ECONOMIC OR PURELY TECHNOCRATIC POSITIONS.

6. ON FOREIGN POLICY FRONT, EDITORIAL NOTES THAT FURTHER PROGRESS IN CARRYING OUT DIRECTIVES OF 24TH PARTY CONGRESS HAD BEEN MADE SINCE APRIL 1973 CC PLENUM. STRESS PLACED IN EDITORIAL ON INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST UNITY ON BOTH POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL FRONTS SUGGESTS THAT BREZHNEV PLACED PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THIS SUBJECT IN SPEECH.

7. COMMENT: WHILE CONCEPT OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION ASSOCIATIONS WAS MENTIONED IN BREZHNEV'S REPORT TO 24TH PARTY CONGRESS AND INCORPORATED IN DIRECTIVES OF CONGRESS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PRESENT FIVE YEAR PLAN, EDITORIAL GIVES IMPRESSION THAT DECISION HAS NOW BEEN TAKEN TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SPEED UP PROCESS. THIS DEVELOPMENT PARALLELS INDUSTRIAL REFORM WHICH WAS SET FORTH IN CC AND COUNCIL OF MINISTERS RESOLUTION ISSUED LAST MARCH, INDICATING THAT THIS APPROACH TO ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION WILL BE CONTINUED DESPITE APPARENT OPPOSITION EXPERIENCED IN CARRYING OUT DIRECTIVES OF MARCH RESOLUTION.

8. MOST INTRIGUING ASPECT OF EDITORIAL IS MENTION OF

ELIMINATING DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN KOLKHOZ AND STATE FORMS OF PROPERTY. WE DO NOT KNOW IN WHAT PARTY PROGRAM THIS OBJECTIVE CAN, AS ASSERTED BY THE EDITORIAL, BE FOUND; IT DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE BEEN ARTICULATED IN THE 24TH PARTY CONGRESS DOCUMENTS. WHILE WE DO NOT CONCUR WITH THOSE OBSERVERS WHO HAVE CHARACTERIZED THIS AS BEGINNING OF MOST RADICAL NEW DEPARTURE IN AGRICULTURAL FIELD SINCE STALIN'S COLLECTIVIZATION PROGRAM, INDICATION IN EDITORIAL THAT DECISION HAS BEEN TAKEN TO CONVERT KOLKHOZ TO HIGHER AND MORE IDEOLOGICALLY PREFERABLE FORM OF PROPERTY ORGANIZATION CAN HAVE MANY IMPORTANT RAMIFICATIONS. PRESUMABLY AUTHORITIES CALCULATED THAT THIS YEAR'S BUMPER HARVEST HAS PROVIDED APPROPRIATE CONDITIONS TO FLOAT THE IDEA. ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW THIS SHIFT WOULD BE CARRIED OUT, WE WOULD NOT EXPECT IT TO BE DONE PRECIPITOUSLY; THAT WOULD BE OUT OF KEEPING WITH MANNER IN WHICH PRESENT LEADERSHIP OPERATES. SUBJECT WAS NOT PICKED UP IN PRAVDA AGRICULTURAL EDITORIAL ON DECEMBER 21 NOR WAS IT MENTIONED IN IZVESTIYA SUMMARY ON DECEMBER 19 OF ALL-UNION KOLKHOZ COUNCIL MEETING, AT WHICH IT WOULD HAVE BEEN LIKELY SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION. INSISTENCE ON APPROACHING ECONOMIC ISSUES FROM PARTY POSITIONS, PLUS SLAP AT "TECHNOCRATS," COULD BE CONNECTED INTER ALIA WITH THIS ISSUE. THUS, "TECHNOCRATS" WHO WOULD PERHAPS ARGUE AGAINST POLITICALLY-MOTIVATED, UNSETTLING CHANGES IN COUNTRYSIDE MAY BE GETTING REMINDER THAT ELIMINATION OF KOLKHOZ/SOVKHOZ DISTINCTION IS PARTY GOAL WHICH TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER STRICTLY ECONOMIC CONCERNS.SOMMERLATTE

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